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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the enrollment of African-American students in independent neighborhood schools across the country. Students in these schools constitute the second largest group of African-Americans outside the nation's public school systems. Over 52,000 African-American students are enrolled in independent schools. Data for African-American enrollment are provided for independent schools belonging to the following institutions: (1) National Catholic Educational Association; (2) Institute for Independent Education; (3) National Association of Independent Schools; (4) General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists; (5) The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; (6) Christian Schools International; and (7) National Association of Episcopal Schools. Other institutions, for which such data are not available, are also listed. Ten references are included. (JS)

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# AFRICAN AMERICAN ENROLLMENT IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

## (1988-89)

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No. 6 April 1990

# African American Enrollment in Independent Schools

## (1988-89)

Over 52,000 African-American students are enrolled in independent neighborhood schools across the country. These students constitute the second largest group of African Americans outside the nation's public school systems.

Following is a partial list of African-American enrollment in independent schools:

| | |
|---|---|
| **National Catholic Educational Association** | **226,590** |
| **Institute for Independent Education** | **52,744** |
| **National Association of Independent Schools** | **16,230** |
| **General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists** | **14,364** |
| **The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod** | **13,185** |
| **Christian Schools International** | **5,000** |
| **National Association of Episcopal Schools** | **2,653** |
| **Total** | **330,766** |

(NOTE: Data reported by the Institute and by Christian Schools International are estimates. In addition, there is virtually no overlap caused by schools being listed in more than one category.)

## Notes

### All non-public schools

The U.S. Department of Education has estimated that the enrollment of students in "private" schools from all ethnic groups is 5,354,754 (*Key Statistics*, 1989). This estimate of data provided in the fall of 1989 is based on a probability sample.

In an earlier report, the department found that for "minority" enrollments at all "private" schools:

- 39 percent reported less than 5 percent;
- 22 percent reported 5 to 14 percent;
- 11 percent reported 15 to 24 percent;
- 10 percent reported 25 to 49 percent;
- 18 percent reported 50 percent or more (*Private Schools*, 1987).

### Institute for Independent Education

There are 211 independent schools in the Institute's *Directory of Independent Schools, 1988*. Some schools now are closed, and new ones have been added. From a revised list, the Institute identified 284 schools at which enrollment is almost entirely African-American. This sample excludes schools that serve primarily Hispanic/Latino-Americans, American Indians, or Asian-Americans.

Independent neighborhood schools usually are located in inner-city areas. Their operating characteristics and the reasons why parents choose them are outlined in an earlier research report (Ratteray and Shujaa, 1987).

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The current estimates are based on average enrollments drawn from the database of the 1987 research so as to distinguish more clearly between the various types of schools, as follows:

| Type of School | Grades | Average Enrollment |
|---|---|---|
| Secondary only | 9 - 12 | 251 |
| Elementary-Secondary | K - 12 | 273 |
| Elementary-Middle | K - 8 | 270 |
| Elementary only | K - 6 | 116 |

Only a few are at the extremes, ranging from 15 students in one school to over 2,000 in another.

It should be noted that independent neighborhood schools differ from other independent schools in that they often grow by adding a grade each year. Also, the Institute is not a membership organization. Schools voluntarily submit enrollment data and participate in Institute programs.

Independent neighborhood schools date back to 1798 and represent institutions built by African-Americans in the pursuit of liberty (Ratteray, 1988). Approximately 89 percent of them began after World War II (Ratteray and Shujaa, 1987). One such school has been in existence since 1828, and new schools continue to be started each year.

### National Association of Independent Schools

Members of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) are defined as "non-profit, tax-exempt organizations maintaining fiscal independence from tax or church monies." NAIS estimates that of the 27,700 private schools in the U.S., approximately 1,500 meet the NAIS definition of "independent," and 893 are active members of NAIS (Independent School Enrollments, 1989).

### Episcopal schools

Of the 749 Episcopal schools in the United States, 323 provided enrollment data to the Association of Episcopal Schools, and 179 of them reported data on their ethnic enrollment.

### Other Christian schools

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America currently is making an effort to compile data on its ethnic enrollment.

Christian Schools International informally estimates that up to 5,000 of the 70,000 students enrolled in its member schools are African Americans.

An unknown number of African-Americans is enrolled in schools that are active members of two associations from which no data are available: the American Association of Christian Schools and the Association of Christian Schools International.

### The public school context

The data on African-American enrollment in independent schools must be viewed in light of enrollment in public schools.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that there are 40,608,342 students in public schools from all ethnic groups (*Key Statistics*, 1989). The Institute for Independent Education determined that 6.7 million African Americans currently are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools (Enrollment and Distribution, 1990).

This enrollment report also examined the distribution of African Americans in 18 states. It found that they are highly concentrated in some states but distributed fairly evenly across others. These demographic data are reported in tables for the 18 states, as well as maps reflecting concentrations within county boundaries. Independent school students should have a similar distribution.

The current report on the enrollment of African-Americans in independent schools and the prior enrollment and distribution report on public schools are part of a larger Institute effort to define the educational environments that affect African-American children and youth.

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